

Payin' it Backward: Migration and Democratic Diffusion in Latin America

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Migration and Democratic Diffusion: Theory

“Social remittances”

Democratic Diffusion

Cross-Border Interpersonal Communication

- Discussions contribute to political learning
- Countries differ & have hierarchical relationships.

Migration and Democratic Diffusion: The Case of Mexico

Three transmission “paths”

- Return migration: Mexicans absorb values in host country (U.S.) and import them their origin country.
- Cross-border communication: Mexicans abroad communicate values to friends and family back home
- Information networks in high-volume sending communities

Attitudes and Behaviors

Attitudes

- Satisfaction with Democracy
- Government Respect for Rights
- Composite Tolerance Indicator

Behaviors

- Non-electoral individual participation
- Organizational participation
- Protest

Prior Findings

- Migration increases democratic attitudes and behaviors, but effects are differentiated
 - Return migration
 - Increased tolerance
 - Negative evaluations of government respect for rights (“critical citizens”)
 - Friends and Family Abroad
 - Less satisfied with democracy
 - More individual and organizational participation, protest
 - High-intensity migration community
 - More organizational participation
- *No Effect for Remittances*

Extending the Research to Latin America: Rationale

- Epistemological: External Validity
- Theoretical
 - Sending Country Diversity
 - Host Country Diversity
 - Reasons for migration

Data and Methods

Latin American Public Opinion Project (2008)

- 22 Countries
- Vanderbilt University
- 2008 included migration questions not in 2010

Las Américas y el Mundo

- Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru
- September – December, 2010
- Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE), Mexico City
- <http://americasyelmundo.cide.edu>

LAPOP 2008: Dependent Variables

Evaluations of Democracy

- Satisfaction with Democracy

Individual Level Political Engagement

- Convince others to vote for party or candidate
- Meet with neighbors to solve community problem
- Contact representative
- Contact Government
- Attend City Council Meeting
- Petition City Council

Collective Participation

- Solve Community Problem
- Member of Professional Organization
- Member of Religious Organization
- Member of Neighborhood Association
- Union Member

LAPOP 2008: Independent Variables

Respondent lived abroad 5 years ago.

Family member resides abroad (5-pt. ordinal
“Never”, “Rarely”, “Once or Twice a Month”, “Once or Twice a Week”,
“Every Day”)

Household receives remittances (binary)

LAPOP 2008: Controls

- Sex
- Age
- Income
- Education
- Urban
- Retrospective sociotropic economic evaluation
- Evaluation of crime as threat to country
- Frequency of internet news consumption

Dependent Variables - LAyEM

Attitudes

- Churchillian Support for Democracy
“Best System of Government Despite its Flaws” (Disagree
Very Much=1, Agree Very Much=4)

Participation

- Participated in Political Campaign (Yes=1, No=0)

Independent Variables - LAyEM

- Family member lives outside country
- Number of trips outside country
- Relative strength of democracy (remitting – sending country)

Control Variables - LAYEM

- Sex
- Age
- Income (\$ per month)
- Perceived sufficiency of income
- Education
- Follows news about domestic and international politics.

Expectations

- Having family members abroad will
 - Make citizens more critical in their evaluations of their country's democracy
 - Increase different forms of civic engagement
- Remittances
 - Increase criticism
 - Decrease engagement
- Having lived abroad
 - Make citizens more critical in their evaluations of their country's democracy
 - Increase different forms of civic engagement
- Relative strength of democracy
 - Make citizens more critical in their evaluations of their country's democracy
 - Increase different forms of civic engagement

Effects of “Family Member Abroad”

LAPOP	
Work for Party	+
Contact Representative	+
Contact Government Agency	+
Attend City Meeting	+
Petition City Council	+
Solve Community Problem	+
Member of Professional Org.	+
Member of Religious Org.	+
Member of Neighborhood Assoc.	+
Union Member	+
LAyEM	
Support for Democracy	+
Campaign Participation	+

Results: Comparable Items in LAPOP and LAyEM

	Attitudes			Party/Campaign Participation	
	LAPOP	LAPOP	LAyEM	LAPOP	LAyEM
Migration Experiences	Evaluation of Democracy	Satisfaction with Democracy	Support for Democracy	Party Work	Campaign Participation
Has Family Members Abroad	n.f.	n.f.	+	+	+
Receives Remittances	—	—	n.f.	+	n.f.
Lived Abroad Five Years Ago	—	—	**	—	**

Results: LAyEM

IVs

- Relative Strength of Democracy
+ for Campaign Participation
- Number of Trips Abroad
+ for Campaign Participation

Summary of Results

Consistent with expectations

- Having a family member abroad:
 - a) unequivocally enhances civic engagement (
 - b) appears to promotes support for democracy
- Having lived abroad 5 years ago
 - a) decreases satisfaction with democracy
 - b) lowers evaluations of level of democracy
- Receiving remittances makes people more critical of their country's democracy

Inconsistent with expectations, remittances may *increase* civic engagement

Next Steps

- What's going on in the individual countries?
 - Better statistical model
 - Case studies
- Effects differentiated by host country
 - Better theory: a more coherent account of why the the implantation of democratic values/behaviors *should* vary according to host country
 - Auxiliary data: more precise idea of who's going where, possibly imputing host countries
- What's going on?
 - Family Abroad